

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 084011

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MASS, KU, TC

SUBJECT: VISIT OF UAE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TO KUWAIT --
I-HAWKS FOR UAE

REFERENCE: ABU DHABI 678 NOTAL

1. AMBASSADOR'S ASSUMPTION REFTTEL CORRECT. LOWER GULF AND
PRESIDENT'S CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFER POLICIES HAVE NOT
CHANGED. RESTRICTIONS INHERENT IN POLICIES SUGGEST THAT
SALE OF HAWKS TO UAE WOULD NOT BE APPROVED WERE QUESTION TO
BE ADDRESSED FORMALLY FOLLOWING OFFICIAL UAE REQUEST TO
PROVIDE THIS WEAPONS SYSTEM.

2. SHOULD SHEIKH SULTAN RAISE ISSUE OF HAWKS FOR UAE BY
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PAGE 02 STATE 084011

REFERRING TO KUWAITI MISSILE SYSTEM, AMBASSADOR SHOULD UNDER-
TAKE TO DISCOURAGE IDEA AT THAT LEVEL BEFORE IT EMERGES AS
FORMAL REQUEST. IN ADDITION TO EARLIER GUIDANCE ON LOWER
GULF ARMS POLICIES, AMBASSADOR MAY WISH TO DRAW ON FOLLOWING
POINTS TO DEFLECT SULTAN'S INTEREST:

A. DECISION TO SELL LIMITED NUMBER OF I-HAWK MISSILES TO

KUWAIT WAS MADE ONLY AFTER CAREFUL STUDY OF KUWAIT'S AIR DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS. STUDY CONCLUDED THAT KUWAIT FACED POTENTIAL THREAT FROM MUCH LARGER NEIGHBOR WITH SUPERIOR

AIR POWER AND ABILITY TO STRIKE WITH LITTLE OR NO WARNING. STUDY FURTHER DETERMINED THAT KUWAIT COULD PURSUE REASONABLE LONG-TERM GOAL OF TRAINING INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM.

B. USG DECLINED TO SELL TOW'S TO UAE PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF ABSENCE OF CONVINCING ARMOR THREAT. IN ABSENCE OF FULLY-STAFFED DOD THREAT ANALYSIS, PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT UAE SIMILARLY LACKS SIGNIFICANT THREAT OF ATTACK BY AIR TO JUSTIFY HAWK SYSTEM.

C. UNLESS IT WERE PREPARED TO STRIP ITS OTHER COMBAT ARMS OF UAE PERSONNEL, UAE WOULD BE OBLIGED TO ASSIGN NON-UAE CITIZENS TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE I-HAWK SYSTEM FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD. (SAUDI AND KUWAITI PROGRAMS FOR EXAMPLE REQUIRE 225 MEN PER HAWK BATTERY.) ANOTHER MANPOWER RELATED PROBLEM IS FACT THAT SALE OF I-HAWKS TO UAE WOULD LIKELY REQUIRE EXCEPTION TO NATIONAL DISCLOSURE POLICY, WERE NON-UAE CITIZENS INVOLVED IN PROGRAM.

4. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SHEIKH SULTAN WILL HAVE HEARD OF STUDY CURRENTLY BEING CONDUCTED BY DOD TO DETERMINE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 084011

FEASIBILITY OF EXTENDING EXISTING SAUDI AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM BY DEPLOYING RADAR ON BAHRAIN. (BAHRAINIS ARE AWARE OF STUDY.) SHOULD TOPIC COME UP, AMBASSADOR MAY NOTE THAT RADAR IS BEING STUDIED IN CONTEXT OF SAUDI AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM IN EASTERN PROVINCE, AND THAT WHATEVER STUDY'S CONCLUSIONS, WE ARE NOT CONSIDERING PROVIDING BAHRAIN WITH AN INDEPENDENT HAWK SYSTEM.

5. FOR MANAMA: STATUS OF DOD STUDY ON HAWK-RELATED RADAR FOR BAHRAIN WILL BE PROVIDED SEPTEL. COOPER

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